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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: NOVEMBER 10, 2008

Summary: Articles on two bombing incidents by NATO jets and Pakistani security forces in Khyber Agency and Bajaur which killed 22 made front-page headlines in several major dailies on Monday. The English daily, "The News," also highlighted the Salarzai tribal elders' resolve to "continue an armed drive against the militants."

National Security Advisor Mahmud Durrani's statement made in an interview with the Newsweek that "drone attacks are souring ties with the U.S." also received prominent display. All newspapers also front paged reports that the "government widened dollar scam investigations."

Several Urdu newspapers ran editorials on the alleged dollar scam. The Urdu daily, "Express," wrote: "The government should make an example of those who are involved in this heinous crime - no matter how influential they are." Criticizing the alleged U.S. drone attacks on Pakistani tribal areas, the English daily, "The Post," noted that such attacks, in fact, "strengthen the terrorists instead of helping the cause of the war on terror... as militants take advantage of the situation and are able to lure more recruits into their fold." Whereas, another English language daily, the "Pakistan Observer," noted that the "situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating with the passage of every day and the occupied country is slipping out of the grip of the United States and NATO forces." End Summary.

News Stories

11. "NATO Jets Kill 8 Banned Outfit Members In Khyber" "Daily Times," "The Nation" (11/10)

"NATO jets today bombed Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency, killing eight members of a banned outfit - Amar Bil Maroof - and injuring three, 'Dawn News' reported. The channel said the NATO jets targeted hideouts of the banned outfit in the Moga area near Torkham."

12. "14 Militants Killed In Bajaur" "Dawn" (11/10)

"Fourteen militants and four non-combatants were killed when air force jets bombed militants' hideouts in Bajaur on Sunday, a political administration official said."

13. "Salarzais Hold Tight Against Militants" "The News" (11/10)

"Undeterred by the recent suicide attack on a tribal Jirga that claimed 22 lives, the Salarzai tribal elders on Sunday resolved to continue their armed drive against the militants, Tribal sources told 'The News' from Bajaur on telephone."

14. "Drone Attacks Souring Ties With U.S., Says Durrani" "Dawn" (11/10)

"National Security Adviser Maj-Gen (Retd) Mahmud Ali Durrani has warned the Bush administration that drone attacks inside Pakistan in pursuit of suspected terrorist targets continue to spoil relations between the U.S. and Pakistan. 'It is very distracting for us. There's collateral damage as well, which upsets the people. So it is not helping our plan. It really throws a spanner in the works,' Mr. Durrani said in an interview published in the Newsweek on Sunday."

¶5. "Government Widens Dollar Scam Investigation" "Daily Times" (11/10)

"The government widened investigations into the alleged smuggling of billions of dollars out of Pakistan, as the Federal Investigations Agency (FIA) questioned top officials of key moneychanger firm Khanani and Kalia International. The sources said investigators had found important data from the firm's computers in its sealed II Chundrigar Road office after Kalia made new disclosures on Sunday."

¶6. "American Officials Monitoring Forex Scandal In Pakistan" "Ummat" (11/10)

"The American officials are keeping an eye on the Pakistan's biggest foreign currency scandal. FIA's cyber crime team has failed to get access to Khanani and Kaliya money changer company's computers. Sources to a private TV channel have disclosed that American officials suspected that foreign money changers companies may have provided money to extremist militant groups."

¶7. "IMF Conditions Not Hard: Tarin" "Dawn" (11/10)

"As the countdown begins for Pakistan to formally request the International Monetary Fund for a bailout package of up to \$5 billion, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Shaukat Tarin has said the fund's conditions will not be tough, he told newsmen in Mardan."

¶8. "Government To Put Forward War On Terror Cost To FoP" "The Nation" (11/10)

"The PPP-led coalition government will put forward the overall economic cost Pakistan has incurred so far in the form of losses of lives, property, military and logistic operations owing to war on terror to the Friends of Pakistan Forum meeting, taking place in Abu Dhabi in near future."

¶9. "U.S. Strikes Proving Counter-Productive: Owais" "Pakistan Observer" (11/10)

"Owais Ahmed Ghani, Governor North West Frontier Province (NWFP) has declared in unequivocal tone that Pakistan was by no means contributing, towards the unrest in neighboring war-trodden country, rather these were the wrong policies of the United States and her coalition partners in war against terror which were not only fueling situation in Afghanistan but also adding to disturbance in our tribal belt."

¶10. "Bush Rejects Petraeus Proposal On Predator Attacks" "The News" (11/10)

"The Bush administration has discarded the proposal stated to be floated by the Central Command (CENTCOM) chief General David Petraeus regarding end to predator attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan adjacent to the border with Afghanistan, reliable diplomatic sources disclosed."

¶11. "6 Civilians Killed In Swat Shelling" "The News" (11/10)

"Six civilians were killed and 10 injured during shelling in Khariri area of Matta tehsil, while militants blew up two more girl schools in Kalakot area of the militancy-hit Swat Valley on Sunday."

¶12. "NGOs Abandoning Projects In FATA, NWFP" "The News" (11/10)

"The Frontier province (NWFP) and its neighboring tribal belt is fast becoming 'no-go zone' for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), forcing a number of national and international organizations to scrap their multi-million dollar projects in these areas."

¶13. "ObamaQto Reassess Strategy On Pakistan, Afghanistan" "Dawn" (11/10)

"One of the first priorities of the Obama administration will be to reassess U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, his aides say. And as a first step, he has appointed Bruce Riedel, a former CIA official and adviser to three U.S. presidents on South Asia and the Middle East as his advisor on Pakistan."

¶14. "Pakistan to Be On Top Of Obama's Priority: Boucher" "The News" (11/10)

"U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher on Saturday said that Pakistan and Afghanistan would be at top of the list in newly present-elect Barack Obama's foreign policy, while addressing a press conference in Kabul."

¶15. "Policies Concerning Pakistan Won't Change: Outgoing U.S. Consul General" "Ummat" (11/10)

"Outgoing U.S. Consul General in Karachi Kay Anske has said that following the U.S. presidential election, the policies concerning Pakistan will not be changed. 'Historic friendship will continue and we want better relationship with Pakistani political parties,' said Anske while talking to journalists during her visit to Jamaat-e-Islami's Karachi office."

¶16. "U.S. Expert Urges Obama To Be Quick On Kashmir" "The Nation" (11/10)

"U.S. President-elect Barack Obama should move quickly to deal with Afghanistan and try to help resolve the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, Meghan O'Sullivan, a former senior American national Security Advisor says."

¶17. "Haqqani Stresses Need To Improve Pakistan Image" "The News" (11/10)

"Pakistan's envoy to the United States Hussain Haqqani has stressed a need to make efforts to remove misperceptions about Pakistan in the West."

Editorials/Op-eds

¶18. "Illegal Currency Business - Need To Bring Perpetrators To Justice," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (11/10)

"The government should make an example of those who are involved in this heinous crime - no matter how influential they are."

¶19. "Illegal Money Transfer," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (11/10)

"After unearthing the foreign exchange scandal it is imperative for the rulers to pay attention to the country's financial situation, reduction in government expenditures and imports, and increase in exports.... Mere statements will not do any good."

¶20. "Operation Against Smuggling Of Dollar," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (11/10)

"The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched a big operation against a big foreign currency company in the country. The charges against this company are that it has transferred some \$10 billion from the country, and allegedly some government officials are also involved in this trade. Now there is one logical question that if any forex company was violating rules, then what was State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) doing, and why did it remain silent?"

¶21. "Another Drone Attack," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (11/10)

"Such attacks, in fact, strengthen the terrorists instead of helping the cause of the war on terror.... Militants take advantage of the situation and are able to lure more recruits into their fold.... The U.S. strategy of putting the Pakistan armed forces against the Taliban seems not to have worked. Such attacks put the government of Pakistan in an awkward position, with some suspecting the Pakistan government of having compromised its sovereignty in the name of fighting the war on terror.... If the border violations continue, the international support for the war on terror will dwindle. If the U.S. does not revise its policy of violating our sovereignty, success in the war against terrorism will remain an elusive dream."

¶22. "While U.S. Is Losing Ground In Afghanistan," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (11/10)

"The situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating with the passage of every day and the occupied country is slipping out of the grip of the United States and NATO forces.... The recent contacts between Taliban and Afghan Government, facilitated by the Saudi King, had the backing of the United States as well is also an indication of change of American thinking. Now a formal review of the situation is underway and it is quite likely that with the exit of the war-mongering Bush administration and assumption of power by Barack Obama the United States might think it appropriate to wind up aggression in Afghanistan as well."

¶23. "Take Practical Steps Instead Of Promises And Announcements," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"It is paradoxical that most of our politicians and rulers believe that the entire global scenario will be altogether changed with the change in U.S. administrations. Instead, our rulers must make it clear to the U.S. that there is now an elected government in Pakistan, and it is not possible to sidestep the decisions of the elected parliament. Moreover, we should not delay in making bold decisions to establish peace in the troubled-areas of FATA and bring tribesmen in mainstream politics."

¶24. "Lost In Islamabad," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"Barack Obama has been busy putting together his team and attempting to instill a sense of confidence in people hit hard by economic crisis. Whether or not Obama's efforts succeed, only time will tell; but certainly, for the present there seems to be a new sense of hope and of inspiration. This ability to inject optimism is essential to the working of any political system. But sadly, similar feelings are totally absent from our own setup. Rather than inspiring trust, our leadership frequently becomes the subject of scorn and ridicule.... At present, in Islamabad, there is a continuing sense of chaos and of drift."

¶25. "The IMF Route," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (11/10)

"We are certain that if we adopt the IMF route, Friends of Pakistan Forum and other IFIs will also join the effort and make the task of stabilizing the economy and ensuring its solvency much easier."

¶26. "Need To Improve The Fiscal Policy," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 5,000) (11/10)

"The flight of \$10 billion proves not only the investors' irresponsible attitude but also their disinterest in national affairs. However it also proves that these people do not consider their money safe in Pakistan, hence to protect it and use it better, they transfer it abroad. To bring this to an end, the government needs to create an investor friendly atmosphere, give them incentives and end the present uncertainty - so that business activity can increase."

¶27. "Zardari-Nawaz Meeting: Move Beyond Lip-Service, Ensure Mutual Cooperation," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (11/10)

"Even the win of the Democratic party in the U.S. presidential polls did not create awareness in our rulers to reconsider pro-U.S. policies.... Now that Mian Nawaz Sharif has hinted at cooperation with the PPP government in the larger interest of the nation, President Asif Zardari should do more than mere lip-service."

¶28. "Decisions Should Be Made With Consensus," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (11/10)

"It is the need of the hour to resolve all national issues with consensus rather than with confrontation and conflicts, and shun all personal, ethnic and party differences in the larger national interests. The differences between the government and the opposition, and the political turmoil are a stumbling block in resolving the growing economic and financial crisis. It is commendable that President Asif Zardari and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif have decided to cooperate with each other to manage the present state of affairs."

¶29. "New Pledge Of Co-Existence Between PPP And PML-N," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (11/10)

"As PML-N is enjoying its rule in Punjab, it does not want to undermine the present political setup. It is following rule of 'live and let live' that is why it is not supporting the lawyers' movement for the restoration of deposed judges. It seems that PML-N has made a compromise with the present situation; therefore President Zardari is rightly expecting PML-N to help the PPP government out of the current crises. As principles and ethics are no more important in our decayed political culture, our political parties should avoid a needless war of words and extend a hand of cooperation to the government."

¶30. "One Way To Beat Financial Crisis," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (11/10)

"A welcoming meeting between President Zardari and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif took place in Islamabad. Reports say the Saudi Ambassador was also present in the meeting. If the two leaders agree to deal with the current financial crisis together, then they should also make known their overseas assets and bring them back in the country."

¶31. "Drafting Obama's Agenda," an op-ed by Ahmad Faruqi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"President-elect Obama declared, 'Change has come.' Nowhere is the need for change more apparent than in U.S. policy toward Pakistan.... The war on terror will only be won if Pakistan takes ownership of it. And it will only do that if its insecurities are addressed.... While drafting a new Pakistan policy, it would be best for president-elect Obama to engage in a more fundamental reassessment of the situation that would bring radical change to the region."

¶32. "Let's Give Mr. Mukhtar an Easier Ministry," an op-ed by Ejaz Haider in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (11/10)

"Let's be clear: we can fight the Americans. But it will be very costly. Any armed struggle must weigh the costs with any perceived benefits. On the other hand, should we fight the Americans? Are the Chinese fighting the Americans, or the Indians rolling up their sleeves? No.... Pakistan and the U.S. are in a cooperative mode in Afghanistan. This is not a tension-free relationship. But neither is it one that calls for overt hostilities. The paradigm used by Islamabad so far has been flawed. Ditto for Washington.... it is more untenable over the longer run to abdicate all responsibility for such strikes. Even if we weren't calling for them, if the strikes do end up taking out targets, the cost of owning them would have been much less than creating an impression that the Americans are doing this unilaterally and there is damn-all we can do about them. Time to rethink what we say. Meanwhile, how about giving

some other ministry to Mr. Mukhtar to reward him for his services to the PPP."

Patterson